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Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe—Europe in the American South, by Richard Gray and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz.

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REFERENCES

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- ¹ *Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe—Europe in the American South* is a volume of essays that attempts a study of the American South in terms of its cultural transactions with Europe. In their introduction the editors, Richard Gray and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, emphasize that the organizing principle of this anthology is a view of the American South as a “border territory” in which cultural processes unfold “across the conventional demarcation lines of region and nation.” The encounters that have been taking place in this border territory, sometimes oppositional, sometimes collaborative or both, are syncretic and productive of hybrid cultural formations that testify to the South’s heterogeneous character, the fact that it exists at “the confluence of cultures.”
- ² The thirty-four essays presented in the volume are organized in thematic clusters that focus on various manifestations of Europe’s “continuing presence in the South” as well as of the South’s “continuing presence in Europe.” Several focus on individual authors (William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Mark Twain, to name a few) in terms of their complex engagement with European philosophical thought and literary formations, or in terms of their ideological ‘reading’ of European social and political phenomena. Other essays concern themselves with the European reception of Southern literature and the influence exerted by American Southern authors (such as Flannery O’Connor, Carson McCullers,

and others) in Europe or the ways in which the American South has been experienced and re-imagined by representatives of European literature and the movie industry. The critical assumptions of the writers of the essays vary. While some clearly challenge or problematize the validity of the American South as a discursive entity and interrogate the dialectical approach to the subject (American South/Europe), others emphasize the processes of cross-fertilization between representatives of the Southern and European political and cultural spheres. Finally, there is discussion of 20th-century as well as 19th-century transatlantic influences, while approaches range from conventionally literary to historical, sociological, and anthropological (for instance, there is an interesting cluster of essays on mountain and folk culture).

- 3 *Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe—Europe in the American South* emphasizes the permeability of the American South's cultural borders, thus destabilizing the traditional view of it as a 'static' entity. This is an inclusive, albeit, unavoidably, not an exhaustive treatment of a very complex and multi-faceted subject. A scholar or student of American culture will find much to interest them in this extensive anthology which opens up new perspectives for the study of the American South.

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